

BDR CARNAGE

# Victim families want to know the truth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation yesterday paid homage to the army officers and some others including civilians killed during a mutiny at the Pilkhana headquarters of erstwhile BDR on this day in 2009.

Family members and relatives of the slain army officers broke down into tears, as they visited Banani Military Graveyard to pray for the departed souls.

The chiefs of the three services and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), formerly BDR, alongside different organisations placed wreaths at the graves of the carnage victims.

On behalf of the president and the prime minister, president's defence secretary Maj Gen Kazi Fakhrudin Ahmed and PM's additional defence secretary Lt Col Sheikh Md Moniruzzaman laid the wreaths.

In their honour, a minute's silence was also observed. Discussions were held to recall their memories.

At the graveyard, many of the victims' family members told journalists that it did not seem the trial of the carnage would be completed soon. They also said they wanted to know the truth behind the killings and see its end.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, who was talking to journalists after placing wreaths at the graveyard, said, "There are so many mysteries behind the carnage. The mysteries are yet to be solved. The nation wants to know who were behind the mutiny".

The former president stressed the need for finding the masterminds and real culprits, involved in the bloody mutiny.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, however, said the trial of the BDR mutiny case was going on properly, and it would be finished in due time.

He also trashed claims that fettering the under-trial accused is a violation of human rights.

The minister was addressing the inauguration of a training course for district and sessions judges and equivalent judicial officers in the city.

BGB chief Maj Gen Anwar Hossain said the trial should take as much time as it needed for the sake of transparency.

Fifty-seven army officers and 17 others were killed as the members of the border security force staged a mutiny and carnage in Pilkhana on February 25-26, 2009.

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## HOMAGE TO SLAIN ARMY OFFICERS



(Anti-clockwise from top left) The chiefs of the three services, the prime minister's assistant defence secretary, Awami League, the chief of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and additional secretary to the home ministry, opposition BNP, and the president's defence secretary lay wreaths at the graves of the 2009 BDR carnage victims at Banani Military Graveyard in the city yesterday.



### Wife, son visit Ghulam Azam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The wife and a son of Ghulam Azam, who is facing charges of war crimes, visited him at his prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) in the city yesterday.

Wife Syeda Afifa Azam and son former Brig Gen Abdullahil Aman Azmi met the former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer at 4:15pm, said BSMMU Director Brig Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiyan.

"With permission from the Dhaka Central Jail authorities, the detained leader met his family members in the presence of the jail and hospital officials", he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Azmi alleged that the authorities did not allow his cousin for the visit as he holds a British Passport.

"My cousin Dr Maniruzzaman, 45, who is a British citizen and now a university teacher in Malaysia, came to Bangladesh after 34 years to meet my father, but the jail authorities did not allow him despite repeated request," said Azmi.

An official source of Dhaka Central Jail said they were not aware of Maniruzzaman's details and so they did not allow him to visit Ghulam Azam.

"If they further come to us, we will consider it after verification", the source added.

International Crimes Tribunal on January 11 sent Ghulam Azam to jail in connection with committing crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971.

He was later shifted to the BSMMU prison cell for his ailing condition.

### Baby inside baby!

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Doctors at Mirpur Shishu Foundation Hospital yesterday operated on a two-month-old boy and removed a foetus, weighing around 200 grams, from inside his abdomen.

The growing foetus inside the baby boy named Bijoy has developed a little head, some hairs on it, a hand, two legs, and some intestines, the physicians said.

The foetus was preserved in a bottle with embalming chemicals. From the outside, it looks like just a lump of flesh.

Associate Professor Dr Md Arifur Rahman, who led a five-member team in the two-hour operation, said one such case might exist among every five lakh normally born children.

He said the operation was successful and Bijoy was now out of danger.

Bijoy weighed 4.5 kilograms yesterday. Shahid Rana, father of the boy, living in Saturaia of Manikganj, said Bijoy was born on December 21 last year and used to vomit whenever he ate anything. Most of the time he was sick, he said, adding that he felt something round inside the boy's abdomen.

Rana admitted Bijoy to the city hospital on February 20.

The physicians said that during the pregnancy of the boy's mother, the growth of the twin embryos had an imbalance. At a certain time of growth, one of the embryos entered the other due to lack of space in the mother's womb, they added.

The doctors said they detected the foetus inside the boy's abdomen after medical tests.

In 2005, a 16-year-old boy was found carrying his twin inside him. The foetus, weighing around 1.5kg, was successfully removed through an operation in a city hospital.

### Domestic help 'commits suicide' in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help allegedly committed suicide at a teacher's quarter on Fuller road of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

The deceased was Farzana Akhtar, 12, daughter of Billal Hossain of Matlab upazila in Chadpur.

She was working as a domestic help at the house of Dr Hasibur Rahman, professor of DU management department.

The house residents said Farzana went inside the bathroom around 9:00am but never came out.

Farzana's uncle Mohammad Alam said the body was hanging with a towel from the shower of the bathroom.

She was working in the house around one year, he said. The reason behind her death could not be identified, he added.

## Low investment in education impediment to poverty cut

### Speakers tell international symposium

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of investment in education and skill development is an impediment to poverty alleviation and development of a knowledge-based society, said speakers at a two-day international symposium yesterday.

"If we can develop education and skilled human resources, we will be a rich country," said Prof M Kaykobad of Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The symposium was organised by Bangladesh Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Alumni Association at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council in the city.

Kaykobad said although the government aims at turning Bangladesh into a "digital country" by 2021, less priority has been given in education, which creates skilled human resources and would have helped attain the goal.

"Not prioritising education is really shocking," he said, citing that the US spends a considerable amount of money behind each of its students.

The education sector currently gets 14 percent of the total government expenditure and 2.3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) for 2011-2015.

Investment in education should increase for faster alleviation of poverty and development of human resource, said Planning Commission Member Shamsul Alam.

Contribution of education in poverty reduction is much higher than micro credit and remittance earnings. Increased coverage of primary and secondary education facilitates a faster decline in poverty, he said.

Referring to SFYP, Shamsul said they are planning to raise allocation in education to 18 percent of the budgetary expenditure and four percent of the

GDP by the fiscal year 2015.

Lack of infrastructure for educational institutions is another bottleneck in expanding information and communication technology (ICT) education for the development of an e-society, said Kaykobad.

The slogan "Digital Bangladesh" is very encouraging, he said, suggesting on taking real steps that facilitates attainment of the goal.

"India and some other countries are ahead of us (in ICT) and they did not utter words like digital India," he said.

India earns US \$60 billion a year by selling IT services compared to Bangladesh's US\$27 million, he added.

Individual institutions like universities should convert to the digital format first to encourage other organisations. ICT can be a good tool to improve the quality of education, he said, suggesting for the introduction of more mobile applications.



A delegation of International Press Institute (IPI) Press Freedom Mission to Bangladesh calls on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

## MINISTERS GO MISSING Seminar remains a non-starter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without notifying the designated participants and guests, the ruling Awami League postponed a seminar it was scheduled to hold yesterday as a minister and a state minister could not attend it.

According to Ashim Kumar Ukil, a central Awami League leader and one of the organisers, neither Post and Telecommunications Minister Rajuddin Ahmed Raju nor State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman could attend the programme.

The dozen or so guests, including several government employees, party activists, journalists and a ruling lawmaker found the doors of the seminar's venue, Cirdap auditorium, locked at 3:00pm, the scheduled starting time of the seminar.

Several guests waited as over an hour went by with no representative of the organisers around to provide any notice or announcement confirming whether the seminar had been cancelled or postponed.

The seminar, on "digital Bangladesh" and the advancements in the ICT sector in the last three years, is part of the ruling party's ongoing programmes to disseminate the government's achievements.